Advertising Case Study
Critt Graham

File transfer problems.
Solved.

cg | CRITT GRAHAM

Award-winning Atlanta communications firm uses Accellion to send large files securely without bogging down e-mail. Happy users, improved business productivity, and reduced e-mail server load make Accellion the right choice.

Background

Critt Graham + Associates is an integrated corporate, investor, and marketing communications firm providing strategically focused print and interactive media to many of America's leading corporations. The firm is headquartered in Atlanta with offices in New York and Boston. The firm has won numerous awards for its work with customers such as Tyson Foods, Inc. and Fisher Scientific International.

Challenges

What should an advertising agency do when its e-mail system goes down after choking on too many large files? As e-mail service is an integral part of Critt Graham's daily activities, the most immediate need was to restore e-mail capabilities so that the company could continue to function. Critt Graham's IT team, led by Jon Wyche, spent a full weekend rescuing e-mail service while frustrated end users lamented their inability to communicate with both clients and contractors. After a weekend that seemed to drag on forever, e-mail service was restored and Critt Graham breathed a collective sigh of relief. Once the problem was corrected, Wyche, the system administrator at Critt Graham, knew he had to come up with a long term solution in order to prevent similar problems in the future. "I was confronted with the issue of how to prevent an e-mail crisis from occurring again, and how to do it in such way as to keep users happy without adding undue burden onto the IT team," said Wyche. Clearly Critt Graham was not out of the woods yet.

On the face of it, the solution looked quite simple: just keep large files away from e-mail. E-mail was never designed to move large files. However, file transfer has become an integral business process in many organizations and projects regularly involved the daily transmission of numerous large files at Critt Graham. Studies have shown that file attachments typically take up 80 percent of all e-mail storage, oftentimes slowing backups and overwhelming e-mail servers so that IT departments— such as Critt Graham's—have to work for days to restore e-mail service.

The second issue facing Wyche was that Critt Graham users had grown accustomed with the e-mail interface and would require significant training if the company moved to a drastically different file transfer process. "We soon came to the realization that we needed to consider file transfer as its own core business process," said Wyche. "Because it was such an integral part of our business, we needed to find a way tokeep large files away from e-mail servers while making it easy for the daily operations of the end users."

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> Jon Wyche, System Administrator
> Critt Graham + Associates.

When Wyche began to examine his options, he found a number of FTP solutions—all of which he ultimately rejected because they had the wrong usage paradigm. Organizations that use FTP require senders to upload files to the erver, which recipients must access the server in order to download the files. Furthermore, FTP requires extensive IT department involvement, as users must be entered into the system and servers must be periodically purged of all but the required files. Additionally, the potential legal and customer service ramifications of placing unpublished client annual reports on an unprotected FTP server directory were such that Critt Graham decided to avoid FTP entirely.

With end users, IT Department, and other constituencies in mind, Wyche began to explore options that would preserve the "feel" of e-mail, but had the capacity to handle large files without clogging e-mail servers.

Solution

Ultimately, Wyche turned to Accellion to solve Critt Graham's file transfer dilemmas. Accellion's secure file transfer appliance allows users to send large files through an interface similar to e-mail. However, instead of sending the files as part of the e-mail, they arrive in the recipient's inbox as a secure link in the body of an email message. The recipient simply clicks on the embedded link and the file is downloaded from the Accellion appliance. Accellion is capable of sending files containing more than a gigabyte of information from a familiar e-mail-like interface, which added to the end user satisfaction of the solution.

While Accellion effectively solved Critt Graham users' file transfer issues, Wyche particularly appreciated the Accellion appliance's small IT management footprint. With its configurable file lifecycle management feature, Wyche does not have to worry about keeping track of files. Extensive security, audit, and reporting. functionalities also provide him with the tools to be a smart IT manager in the face of any changing compliance measures businesses face. Wyche is very pleased with the Accellion solution, for a number of reasons.

1. Roll out to Critt Graham's end users was seamless. It is as easy to use as e-mail and offers the added benefit of automatically generating a notification to the sender when the recipient downloads a file. This feature saves users the need to call individuals to verify receipt of the file.

2. Rapid communication for both internal and external users. "Since the Accellion Appliance is part of the Atlanta office LAN instead of being a hosted solution, local file transfers are practically instantaneous and outside users can take full advantage of our bandwidth," said Wyche.

3. The Accellion Appliance integrates with Windows 2000/2003 Active Directory. In addition to simplifying the login process by eliminating multiple ID's and passwords, when Critt Graham passwords are rotated the change is immediately reflected within the Accellion secure file transfer system.

4. The IT department is happy because all large file processing has been removed from the e-mail system.

5. IT technicians are also pleased with the low maintenance and management overhead of the Accellion solution. The Accellion Appliance installation was straight forward and has been up and running ever since.

6. Finally, Wyche is happy with the low cost of Accellion secure file transfer. "Accellion provides excellent support and the appliance gives exceptional value," said Wyche. "We are very pleased with our Accellion secure file transfer solution."

Specifications

Critt Graham	
Deployed since	**2005**
# of Appliances	**1**
Location of Appliances	**US**
# of Users	**400 (estimated)**
LDAP/AD directory integration	**Yes**
Web Interface	**Customized**
Email plug-in	**MS Outlook**

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